

[George Richmond]

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George Richmond, whose knowledge of local history is extensive and all inclusive, though according to some of his contemporaries, somewhat highly colored, is one of a trio gathered today in front of the new theater in process of construction on Main Street. Other members of the group are Mr. Harder, a retired brass caster and Tod Waters, who has been at leisure for a number of years. Mr. Richmond, who is exceedingly near sighted, peers intently in my direction as I speak to him, and having satisfied himself as to my identity at last, he says:

"Still lookin' for news, be you? Why don't you go over to Hotchkissville, if you want to find some knifemakers. Ought to be some over there yet, seems to me. It used to be quite a place for 'em."

Mr. Harder: "Knifemakers, hey? Why don't you go up to see Tom Burley, up next to my house. His old man used to be one of the old original Northfield knifemakers. He can tell you anthing you want to know."

Mr. Waters: "Remember that gang that used to come down from Northfield on payday? Fred Russell, and Jack Mason and Charley Klocker and some of them fellas? What a bunch! They always seemed to have plenty of money. I was workin' for Joe Gooley the barber one time. I never cut hair but I used to shave fellas. And Mason come in one afternoon with a fine can on. He got in the chair and I shaved him, and when I got through he handed me a bill. I thought it was a ten. I took it over to the cash register for change and I looked at it again. It was a hundred! I never seen one before or since. Sure, he knew it, he wasn't that drunk. He did it for a joke, you know. A fifteen cent shave and he hands me a hundred dollar bill."

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Mr. Harder: "What you shoulda done, you shoulda made out you thought it was a ten 2 and give him change for ten dollars."

Mr. Waters: "I don't know where the hell they got all the money."

Mr. Richmond: "They used to save up for a long time and then go on a spree. That's the way they used to do."

Mr. Waters: "Why, hell, man, some of them were on a perpetual spree. Like Fred Russell. Drunk most of the time."

Mr. Richmond: "Well, that's the way some of them used to do. Save up and go on a spree."

Mr. Harder: "Look at the bricks they're puttin' in that buildin', will you! It's a shame. Took 'em out of the old Marine shop when they tore the chimney down and now they're puttin' 'em in a new buildin'. All chipped and broke, lime stickin' to 'em. I heard one of the bricklayers say yesterday he was fed up with it. Said if he could get a job sixty cents an hour someplace someplace he'd quit. And look at that wall will you. Ain't ten inches wide. Why, the damn place's liable to fall down a year after they get it built."

Mr. Waters: "Well, there's a buildin' inspector, ain't there[?]"

Mr. Harder: "I guess so. Don't know if he's seen this thing or not."

Mr. Richmond: "I was tellin' this fella the other day. Got talkin' about knives, and clocks and so forth. They don't make anything like they used to. Shoddy. Throw 'em together. Even the buildin's. Look at the town hall, and then look at this thing. And they're all movin' out of the town hall. For what? It's the best built buildin' in town."

Mr. Waters: "You tell 'em George."

Mr. Richmond: "Well, it is ain't it?"

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Mr. Harder: "True enough."

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Mr. Richmond: "You take these knives you get in the ten cent store and you take a Northfield knife——"

Mr. Waters: "There was an old lady around here yesterday lookin' for a bus or somethin' to Northfield. Said she used to live there. She must have been eighty years old if she was a day. Well, I told her there wasn't no bus, and she said she had to get up there someway. She said the transportation was terrible all the way. It was two o'clock when I was talkin' to her and she said she'd been on the road from nine in the mornin', comin' from Hartford. Imagine that? Finally I told her to go over to Billy Lyons. He's got a taxi license. I suppose he charged her a buck to get up there. She said she was willin' to pay, she had plenty of money. But it was a shame to take it. If there'd of been anybody around I would of got her a ride up, what the hell, it's only three miles, but you know how it is around here on a Tuesday afternoon. Stores closed and everything, nobody around. It looks like a ghost town. I see her about five o'clock and I asked her how she made out. She said she hired a car off Billy. So I told her she better take a bus right into Waterbury and then to Hartford, goin' back."

Mr. Harder: "The bus service is terrible. I don't see why Lyons keeps that Terryville line."

Mr. Waters: "He'd let go of it if he could, you can bet your life on that. He ain't makin, any money. But he got the franchise and he's stuck with it."

Mr. Richmond: "This certainly is a shoddy piece of work, this buildin'. Don't see why they're movin' out of the town hall and into places like this."

Mr. Waters: "You tell 'em George."

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Mr. Richmond: "Oh, I'll tell 'em all right. But won't nobody listen to me, that's the trouble."